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**MEMORANDUM FOR:** Director, Office of Special Activities  
**SUBJECT:** Justification for Retention of the IDEALIST  
U-2 Program  
**REFERENCE:**

1. The content of several recent formal documents and during informal conversations, it became apparent that a very real possibility exists that both the DOD and the BOB, at the November ExCom meeting, will discuss the need for continuation of the IDEALIST Program. In fact, the BOB announced at both the 1967 and 1968 Budget Hearings that at the November 1968 ExCom meeting they would make a point of discussing the IDEALIST Program in depth, with the aim of determining whether the Program merits continuation. With indications of this type, it well behooves the Agency to be prepared to not only discuss its IDEALIST Program, but to have undeniable proofs that a very valid requirement still exists for continuation of this Program.

2. It can be assumed, that in the forthcoming discussions on this subject, the arguments advocating discontinuation of the IDEALIST Program will be much the same as those used in the past.

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Indeed, some of these points were used successfully and effectively by BOB/DOD during the debates surrounding the life of the OXCART Program. The following depicts salient examples from these now familiar arguments:

- a. The cost of the program exceeds the value of the returns derived from it.
- b. The ;USAF could perform these reconnaissance tasks as well and at less expense to the Government.
- c. There is no longer a need to differentiate between civilian and military pilots for reconnaissance missions.
- d. Two units (CIA-SAC) means a duplication of costs and expenses.
- e. The IDEALIST Program has, on an average, completed far less operational flying time and missions than the USAF, therefore the USAF is doing more productive work and should be given all the U-2 resources.

3. Undoubtedly, there are numerous other views in the same vein that could be brought to bear on this subject. It is not however, the intent of this paper to match argument for argument, nor to rehash the reasons for and against the military assumption of the IDEALIST Program. If, however, through lack of diligence

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and effort on our part, these roles and assets were to be lost by the Agency, the impact on the Intelligence Community would be immeasurable. Therefore, this paper will attempt to record only the advantages and adaptability of the IDEALIST Program to the U.S. Intelligence Community, and, thereby, positively show the program's ability to stand above any of the BOB/DOD contentions for its demise. There has to be sound assurances that a continuation of this Program will serve the best interests of the USA.

4. There is no escaping the assumption that the U.S. Government, in the years to come, will have a requirement for reconnaissance of denied territory which can be attributed to non-military resources. The missions and roles of the CIA U-2's have in the past, and indeed, will in the future, be entirely separate and different from any other US reconnaissance aircraft, (including the SAC U-2's). The CIA U-2's are, simply stated, required to be capable of overflying denied territory in peacetime. A more formal definition would be the ability to successfully overfly denied territory with impunity in a non-military aircraft flown by a bona fide civilian.

5. Peacetime overflights of denied territory dictate completely different sets of requirements for the aircraft systems configuration, the pilot used, the command and control of the mission, and the political approval mechanisms for the mounting for the mission. It is foregone knowledge that peacetime overflights of any "other country" require prior approvals for the mission by highest political elements of the U.S. Government. ~~SECRET~~

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political risk involved, the "fool-proof" success of any mission must be virtually guaranteed to these upper levels of the US Government. Prior to soliciting these approvals, considerable efforts are, therefore, expended to adjudge the overall risk and to estimate the success factor for each IDEALIST U-2 flight.

6. Perfection requirements for these missions explain in part the additional cost and reduced number of IDEALIST operational missions/flying hours. It is the conviction of those experienced in U-2 operations that development efforts over the last few years have in fact made the IDEALIST U-2 an exceptionally low risk, highly responsive and flexible reconnaissance vehicle. It further bears noting that CIA enjoys a recognized unique capability for constantly and promptly developing and adapting equipment, tactics, and operational procedures that insure lowest level of vulnerability for this overflight aircraft. IDEALIST served in the development of many unique techniques for application of the U-2 reconnaissance system on a world-wide basis. This program possesses the capability of operating the U-2 from aircraft carriers, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] and a proven, fast deployment posture that is responsive to crises situations anywhere in the world.

7. In the actual conduct of operations and the interface with

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other countries, the CIA has greater flexibility and overall effectiveness in those reconnaissance efforts which the United States does not wish to acknowledge officially:

a. CIA can enter into agreements with other countries to accomplish reconnaissance tasks without inducing overtones of a program "give-away" and, still retain control of the coverage of the desired reconnaissance targeting.

b. The Agency's clandestine techniques in its negotiations with foreign governments, can insure that the line of political responsibility for any incident not be back-tracked to the U.S., as easily as it would be for a USAF (military) program.

8. In summary, and in view of the expected comparisons to be made of the CIA and SAC programs, it warrants reiterating that each program is designed to serve a specific purpose and it is more realistic to consider their relationship as complementary, and not competitive. IDEALIST gives our Government a choice of weapons; the intelligence requirements dictate which weapon should be employed.

9. It is, therefore, recommended that a butcher paper briefing be prepared for presentation to Mr. C. Duckett with the ultimate aim being a paper and briefing of Mr. Helms prior to the scheduled Nov. 4 ExCom meeting.